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Written testimony of Michelle Costa, RN, Vice President of Clinical Operations, Genesis HealthCare, LLC Concerning S.B. No. 1064 (RAISED) AN ACT CONCERNING THE ADMINISTRATION OF MEDICATION IN NURSING HOMES BY CERTAIN NURSE'S AIDES

Good evening Senator Gerratana, Representative Johnson and to the members of the Public Health Committee. My name is Michelle Costa. I have been a licensed register nurse since 1986 and also hold the position of Vice President of Clinical Operations at Genesis HealthCare, LLC in Andover, Massachusetts. Genesis HealthCare LLC is a longstanding provider of nursing home care in several Connecticut communities. I am here this evening to ask the Human Services Committee to support S.B. No. 1064 (RAISED) AN ACT CONCERNING THE ADMINISTRATION OF MEDICATION IN NURSING HOMES BY CERTAIN NURSE'S AIDES

This legislation authorizes Connecticut skilled nursing facilities and rehabilitation centers to employ Certified Nurses Aides (CNAs) with additional training and experience, as prescribed by the Department of Public Health, to administer medication to nursing home residents. This proposed authority is similar to the authority provided to homemaker home-health aides in the 2012 session of the Connecticut General Assembly. The specific certification requirements, including training and experience requirements, will be set forth in regulations promulgated by the Department of Public Health according to the bill as drafted. Authorizing CNAs to administer medications, except those administered by injection, in the closely supervised nursing home environment is a cost-effective approach to the safe administration of medicines. Under SB 1064, a prescribing practitioner will have the clear authority to specify that a medication shall only be administered by a licensed nurse.

Adoption of SB 1064 will improve the quality of care Connecticut nursing home residents receive.

I have had the privilege to work with Certified Medication Aides since 1992 when I entered long term care in the state of Rhode Island. The Certified Medication Aide allowed me as the Registered Nurse to spend more time with our residents to provide

comprehensive assessments, round with physicians, develop and monitor plans of care and provide resident and family education. The Certified Medication Aide is an enhancement to the nursing department and not a replacement for licensed nurses. The CMA is trained and educated on medication administration therefore his/her focus is on the safe administration of medication to our residents. It has been my experience that most of our medication errors in long term care are the transcription of the medication orders which the CMA is not allowed under the scope of practice. Few errors are committed with the medication administration.

Thank you again for this opportunity to testify and I would be happy to answer any questions you may have.